

## Fulbright Stresses Lack of Formal Saigon Aid Bid

By RICHARD HALLORAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24—Senator J. W. Fulbright intends to use the State Department's disclosure of the absence of a formal, written request from Saigon for American troops "for all it's worth" in making his case against the war in Vietnam, an aide to the Senator said today.

The spokesman said that Mr. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, would question Secretary of State William P. Rogers on the implications of the lack of such a request when the Secretary next appears before the committee.

The committee has been trying to get Mr. Rogers to testify for several months. A State Department spokesman said Mr. Rogers would appear at a "mutually satisfactory date" after his return from the United Nations General Assembly.

The State Department holds that the absence of a formal request does not undermine the political, constitutional or diplomatic basis for the presence of American troops in South Vietnam.

### 'Flouting of Right to Know'

Senator Fulbright, long a critic of United States involvement in South Vietnam, brought the issue to light Sept. 12 on the floor of the Senate. He began by stating that "in terms of flouting by Government officials of the people's right to know the facts, there has been no period in American history comparable to that of our involvement in Vietnam."

The Arkansas Democrat said he was struck by a report from Gen. William C. Westmoreland, formerly the American commander in Vietnam and now Chief of Staff of the Army, that contained no mention of a request for American troops by the South Vietnamese Government.

The Senator said he wrote to Secretary Rogers on May 12 asking for copies of any formal request, saying that "questions have been raised, from time to time, concerning the circumstances under which United States combat forces were first sent to Vietnam."

ment thereon, were such as to be regarded by our Government as constituting a request from the Government of Vietnam."

Mr. Torbert said that a communiqué issued by their Premier of South Vietnam, Phan Huy Quat, on March 7, 1965, confirmed the request.

In his Senate speech Mr. Fulbright said that "it is shocking

to realize that Congress was not asked for specific authority for the sending of American soldiers to South Vietnam and, indeed, that the Government of South Vietnam itself did not make a written, formal request for these troops."

The largely secret United States involvement in Laos has become an issue here in the last week.

### 'Constant Consultation'

After a four-month search, which evidently turned up no formal request, the State Department replied. H. G. Torbert Jr., Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, said the dispatch of troops "resulted from a continuing analysis of a constantly changing situation."

"The continuing analysis to which I have referred," Mr. Torbert wrote, "and the series of decisions resulting from it, were made in close and constant consultation with the Government of Vietnam. The process of analyzing the situation by the two Governments, and the consultation and agree-

BY STEWART ALSOP



## VIETNAM: THE NIXON GAME PLAN

**WASHINGTON**—If the specialists in such matters are right, the death of that undoubted genius, Ho Chi Minh, is very unlikely to result in the near future in any real change in the policy line laid down by Ho. That policy line was based on a simple assumption—that domestic political pressures would sooner or later force the Nixon Administration to accept, perhaps with some light camouflage, the Communist terms for a settlement in Vietnam.

Those terms, tirelessly repeated in Paris, amounted to unconditional surrender—unilateral withdrawal of all American troops and the replacement of the anti-Communist Saigon regime with a Lublin-model Communist-front government. The Communist terms have been repeated so tirelessly that they have led the President and his advisers to a somber conclusion—that a negotiated settlement in Vietnam is simply not possible, as long as Hanoi is convinced Washington has no choice but to liquidate the war at any cost.

As this conclusion has come to seem more and more obvious and unavoidable, the President and his chief advisers have had to discard the pet theories of how to end the war which they brought with them into office. The President's pet theory was that the Russians could somehow be pressured or persuaded to arrange an acceptable settlement. Dr. Henry Kissinger's pet theory was the "two-track" idea—that a military settlement, based on mutual withdrawal, could be negotiated between Washington and Hanoi, while a political settlement was negotiated between Saigon and the NLF.

### CLOUD COVER

These theories have been exploded by events. In their place, what that ardent sports fan President Nixon calls a "game plan" for Vietnam has emerged in rather clear outline, beneath a cloud cover of apparent indecision and intentional obfuscation. Barring some sudden change in the situation resulting from Ho's death, the Nixon game plan will from here on out govern American policy in Vietnam.

The purposes of the Nixon game plan are twofold. One purpose is not to win the war—which the Nixon Administration has recognized as unwinnable in any traditional sense—but (to split an infinitive) to not lose the war. The other purpose is to create the domestic po-

litical conditions necessary to persuade Hanoi that the U.S. is capable of continuing indefinitely to not lose the war.

Hanoi, in short, is to be persuaded that Washington, too, can play the waiting game, and thus eventually—if the theory behind the game plan works—an "honorable" settlement of the war will be achieved, tacitly or by negotiation. What Defense Secretary Melvin Laird likes to call "Vietnamization" of the war is the first part of the game plan.

### PRESENT INTENTION

By "Vietnamization"—substituting Vietnamese infantry for American infantry—the bulk of the American ground combat forces will be withdrawn. The present intention is to reduce the total U.S. troop commitment to "around 300,000, or maybe less" before the Congressional elections in November 1970. By that time, according to the game plan, the basic mission of the American troops still in Vietnam will be to supply the Vietnamese infantry with logistic support, air- and fire-power.

Since the infantry takes almost all of the casualties, American casualties will—according to the theory—be much reduced. But President Nixon and his advisers are convinced that the draft, even more than American casualties, provides the really combustible fuel for antiwar passions, especially on the college campuses.

Therefore, the game plan calls for a determined effort to pass lottery-type draft legislation in this session of Congress. If such legislation passes, only about one boy out of three will be affected by the draft—the other two will be free to go about their business, unworried by the draft, after the age of nineteen. This, the authors of the game plan believe, would do much to cool campus passions.

If legislation cannot be passed, administrative action will be used, to the extent possible, to accomplish the same end. Everything will also be done to keep draft calls to a minimum. Finally, the Pentagon will be ordered to reduce the proportion of draftees in Vietnam—now about 29 per cent of the 500,000-plus men there—to a minimum, leaving in time only volunteers or regulars to carry on the war there.

The game plan thus envisages a situation in which only one unlucky boy out of three is affected by the draft, and the unlucky one (as well as his girl

friend or his fond mama) can be assured he will not be sent to Vietnam against his will. In this situation—or so the authors of the game plan reason—the passions of dissent will be stilled, and the United States can continue, if necessary for a long time, a limited effort sufficient to assure that the war will not be lost.

This plan is not stupid or irrational. But as Robert Burns pointed out, the best laid game plans of mice and men gang aft a-gley. The plan calls for a rapid withdrawal rate—around 20,000 troops a month as an average for the next year. The military are simply not going to agree willingly to such a withdrawal rate.

In June, President Nixon wanted to announce a withdrawal of 60,000 troops, but he was persuaded by the military to hold the withdrawal to 25,000. As reported last week in this magazine, the delay in the expected withdrawal announcement in August was caused by a hassle between the White House and the Joint Chiefs on the size of the withdrawal. In short, if the Nixon game plan is to operate on schedule, the President is going to have to buck the generals.

### REAL RISK

Bucking the generals is not as risky as it once was, and the President has a useful ally in Secretary Laird, who is liked by the generals and who is determined to push through his program of "Vietnamization." The real risk is that the generals could turn out to be right. What they fear as a result of the rapid rate of U.S. withdrawal envisaged in the Nixon game plan is some sort of military disaster, and the disintegration of the whole anti-Communist front in Vietnam.

That risk is of course real. Is it what Secretary of State William Rogers calls "a sensible risk for peace"? A clue to the answer to that question will be found in the soon-to-be-announced "second-slice" withdrawal. If it is 40,000 or more, that can be taken to mean that the President intends to buck the generals and push ahead with his game plan. That in turn will mean that the President has concluded that the war, fought as it is now being fought, is poisoning the body politic of the United States; and that it is better to risk military disaster in Vietnam than political disaster in the United States.

Vietnam

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2

# Political Liberty

## A Dispensable Saigon Luxury

By RICHARD DUDMAN

Chief Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

LAST OF A SERIES

SAIGON, July 10.

A LONG TIME WESTERN observer of Southeast Asia, one whose judgments have been proved right time after time, quotes Talleyrand in appraising President Nguyen Van Thieu's policy of political arrest and imprisonment: "It is worse than a crime — it is a blunder."

By Asian standards, the semipolice state that Thieu and former Premier Nguyen Cao Ky have been operating for four years with American backing is not particularly brutal or even very efficient.

Considerable criticism of the government is permitted, press censorship is only spotty, and torture is applied only occasionally. The National Assembly, whose members enjoy immunity from government reprisal, rivals the United States Congress as an independent center of power and dissent.

If Thieu has used the police power to neutralize political leaders who threaten his position and policies, it must be said also that political assassination is not the fashion here as it is in some countries.

BUT CRITICS ask whether this is one situation where normal standards won't do.

South Vietnam's situation is a special case, far different from the problems faced by the governments of Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea, Formosa, India and Pakistan, where the practice of throwing political enemies in jail is also well established.

Two sets of circumstances set South Vietnam apart from the rest:

First, the government is beset by a well-organized and deeply rooted revolutionary conspiracy. Operating in secret the Viet Cong have set up a shadow government through most of the country, with functionaries to match all the principal officials of Thieu's government.

Second, as the United States begins to withdraw its forces, Thieu's government begins to approach the moment of truth when the Viet Cong insurgency will turn from war and terror to political competition. Both sides will have to begin trying to win through politics what they could not win through fighting, and that means competing for the voluntary allegiance of the South Vietnamese people.

THIEU HAS been concentrating on the first at the expense of the second. What is more, his emphasis has the encouragement of the U.S. mission, if not as a matter of American policy at least as the cumulative impact of the thousands of American advisers. In their eagerness to track down and liquidate members of the shadow government, Thieu and Vice President Ky generally see political liberty as a dispensable luxury.

More specifically, they argue that the Saigon government must not be bound by ordinary rules of evidence and due process of law. After all, they often say, the government cannot afford to take a chance when a politician who advocates a neutralist or coalition policy may actually be a disciplined agent of the Viet Cong.

Leniency toward such talk, moreover, could serve to stiffen the determination of Hanoi and the Viet Cong to continue the fighting in the hope of more and more political concessions, it is contended.

AT THE HEART of the pacification effort is Operation Phoenix, an effort to identify, ferret out and dispose of the key members of the Viet Cong "infrastructure."

Phoenix is a largely secret enterprise, operated by the Vietnamese although it was organized by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and is guided by American "Phoenix advisers" in the 44 provinces and most of the 242 districts as well as major cities.

All intelligence resources are used to build a blacklist of the supposed key figures in the shadow government and find their whereabouts. When one is found, the final step is to send a military, paramilitary or police detachment to persuade the identified Viet Cong official to defect, to arrest him, or, if necessary, to kill him.

In one of the few public accounts of Operation Phoenix, the U.S. mission reported last winter that 8600 blacklisted suspects had been "captured, killed or well-

months of last year. The report said the "bag" was 1459 for October and 2338 for November. The November "bag" included 1563 captured, 409 killed resisting arrest and 366 who defected to the government's side.

CRITICS SAY the Phoenix system often is abused. Huong Ho, a member of the National Assembly from Kien Phong Province, says police often pick up someone on the street, order him to denounce a wealthy citizen as a Viet Cong agent, arrest the rich man, and then release him on payment of 25,000 or 50,000 piasters in ransom.

Ngo Cong Duc, a deputy from Vinh Binh Province in the Mekong Delta, says that malicious informants and sometimes actual Viet Cong agents supply names to the Phoenix blacklist, getting around the Phoenix system of cross-checks by reporting a person through several different agencies.

U.S. officials contend that necessary flexibility makes some abuses inevitable. The mission's report says that a person arrested is taken before a military field court "if the evidence and the testimony add up to a legal case." But it notes that "such legally admissible evidence may be impossible to obtain if most of the witnesses and the evidence are beyond the court's reach in enemy territory."

"If the case against the suspect is nevertheless conclusive, he is detained," says the report. "Under Vietnamese law, such a man may be detained without judicial charge up to two years, and that detention period may be extended if the detainee's freedom would constitute a threat to the security of the nation."

AMERICAN officials consider the present system a great improvement over Gen. William C. Westmoreland's old "county fair" operation, in which a village was cordoned off, all the villagers screened, perhaps hundreds held for investigation and the great majority eventually freed as innocent bystanders.

The Phoenix blacklist was refined three months ago to eliminate mere rank and file and leave only the Viet Cong leaders — members of the newlyelected village and hamlet "liberation committees" and such officials as political, finance and security chiefs in the shadow government.

This substitution of "a rifle shot for a shotgun blast" has reduced the blacklist from more than 90,000 to about 70,000 and doubtless has lessened the number of innocent persons carried on the list. But in some districts the Vietnamese blacklist remains twice or three times the size of the U.S. blacklist, leaving the way open for continued wholesale arrests.

WHETHER a person is arrested in the Phoenix program or picked up in a military sweep, his case eventually goes before a provincial security council, comprising top law enforcement officials with the recent addition of a judge and the president of the elected provincial council.

Proceeding much as a local draft board in the United States, the security council perhaps 20 or 30 cases at each sitting.

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2

continued

It rarely sees the suspect or the witnesses, acting usually on the basis of a written record of the investigation. The suspect is not permitted to have a lawyer and often may not see his relatives until the investigation is over and the security council has acted.

As a random example, the records of a recent security council meeting for Thua Thien Province showed that, of 30 cases considered, seven suspects were released, 22 were sentenced to two years or less in prison, and one was ordered transferred to Da Nang for trial by a military court. Two years is the longest sentence that may be imposed without trial.

**HARSH AS** this may seem — to be subject to imprisonment for two years without having a lawyer or a trial — attorneys say still worse things happen. They cite numerous cases in which defendants are held for months after acquittal by one of the military courts.

Sometimes the results seem to justify police-state methods. Several cases examined by the Post-Dispatch sounded at first like flagrant use of the police power to settle grudges or extort money from prominent citizens. The victims were pillars of their communities, reputable physicians and merchants, and their families and friends were terrified and outraged. In each case, the police followed the usual practice of holding the "suspect" incommunicado during lengthy investigation.

What the families and friends did not know, however, and do not know even yet, is that police had obtained detailed confessions in which the suspects admitted that they were key officials of the Viet Cong's shadow government. While living ostensibly normal and upright lives in their cities and towns, they said, they had secretly been serving in such capacities as paymaster, supply agent and intelligence co-ordinator in this Viet Cong "infrastructure."

**EACH OF** the conspirators told of having served in Ho Chi Minh's guerrilla army against the French and having settled in the South after the country was partitioned in 1954. In each case, a Viet Cong agent, an associate from the old Viet Minh days, eventually appeared. Through threats and persuasion, the solid citizen was drawn into the underground organization. Once there, he was held in constant fear of being exposed if he did not continue to co-operate.

Dossiers of the cases show that when a Vietnamese confesses he really tells all. Some of the confessions list as many as 100 names of others said to have attended meetings and done the work of the Viet Cong conspiracy.

Officials argue that if a suspect had seen his family or lawyer during the investigation, word of his confession could have leaked out. Any secret

the informant could have gone into hiding before police could act on the information.

**A CONTRARY** case was a scandal that broke into the open last May in Vinh Binh province when Congressman Duc began receiving complaints from home about widespread arbitrary arrests.

A full congressional investigation determined that there had been several hundred unjustified arrests and that many of the victims had been held for months merely on suspicion that they might have a Viet Cong connection. The minister of the interior blamed low-level officials and ordered rapid processing of the prisoners to release the innocent.

Duc told the Post-Dispatch that most of the victims had been rounded up as part of a province-wide extortion racket in which pay-offs for release from detention went all the way to the province chief. He said a crooked province police chief shared in the pay-offs.

**SOME OF** the arrests, Duc said, were because of local grudges. One wealthy man was picked up because his daughter had scorned the advances of a province official. In some cases, he said, Viet Cong agents had given information to the police to punish persons who had refused to co-operate with their underground organization.

At Phu Vinh, the province capital, American military and civilian advisers said they resented the bad publicity and contended that conditions there were no worse than in most other provinces. Most jails are overcrowded, disposition of cases goes slowly, and complaints of crooked police chiefs are common all over South Vietnam, they said.

There were obvious political motives in Duc's charges — he was feuding with the province chief. There were rumors, moreover, that Duc was working for the Viet Cong. An American officer said he found partial confirmation of the rumors in a remark Duc had made after several drinks at a reception in the Tet holidays last winter. This treasonous remark turned out to have been an observation that the Americans had not succeeded very well in Vietnam.

**BUT A U.S.** political specialist looked into Duc's charges and found them fully justified. Citizens had, indeed, been rounded up and held merely because they happened to be found in the area of a military operation. Police ignored the advice

chiefs, who vouched for the suspects.

A jail built for 270 inmates held more than 700, some of them there as long as nine months for investigation. Processing of the prisoners was accelerated from five a month to 50 a month only after the congressional investigation.

One result of the police-state methods and Thieu's exclusive emphasis on destroying the Viet Cong is that many of the most promising non-Communist political leaders have been imprisoned, driven into exile, thrown into the army or otherwise put out of action.

Another is the technical point that widespread detention without legal counsel or trial actually interferes with successful police work. Lawyers protect their clients, but they also protect the government against the mistakes and self-delusion that grow out of false accusations, false information and false confessions extorted by third-degree methods.

**MOST IMPORTANT** of all, the South Vietnamese government is hurting its own credibility by employing the methods of a police state. When the authorities do catch a bona fide Viet Cong agent, public doubts arise because of the secrecy that surrounds the investigation and prosecution.

Many Vietnamese and Americans fear that, when a cease-fire eventually comes, the Viet Cong will remain a powerful political force, whereas Thieu will have knocked off any important non-Communist opposition and will have to face the Communists alone.

The prospect is that the South Vietnamese people will continue to regard the Saigon government as an oppressive force seeking only to collect taxes and draft men into the army instead of being a source of support and assistance and protection.

If that happens, self-determination will offer only a poor choice.

# Red Defectors Increase

by MIKE MILLER

Scripts-Howard Staff Writer

Defectors from the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops and their supporters in South Vietnam are running at twice last year's rate.

About 70 per cent of the defectors are coming from the Mekong Delta — a big increase for that region.

Military officials said today that 20,169 communist defectors have crossed to South Vietnamese government control since Jan. 1 under the Chieu Hoi (open arms) program.

This compares with 18,000 Hoi Chanhs (each defector under Chieu Hoi is called a Hoi Chanh) for all of 1968.

While the officials acknowledged that defections fell off sharply during the first half of last year because of disruptions caused by the enemy's Tet offensive, they noted that this year's rate is also far ahead of all previous years.

There were 27,000 defectors under the program in 1968, the peak year so far, and 20,000 in 1967. Hoi Chanhs total 113,549 since the beginning of the program in 1963, according to the U.S. Vietnam command.

If the Chieu Hoi effort maintains its current pace for the rest of the year, there will be over 30,000 defectors in 1969.

Officials say the Chieu Hoi rate is largely due to allied military pressures against enemy-held territory, the pacification effort, and the hardships Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers are forced to endure.

The big increase in defectors in the Mekong Delta is attributed to stepped up military operations. For the past several months, two brigades of the U.S. Ninth Infantry Division have operated in the Delta along with a sizable U.S. Navy river force and three full divisions of the South Vietnamese Army.

For years the South Vietnamese conducted the ground war in the Delta with only the help of U.S. military advisers.

Another factor is said to be the Viet Cong's problem in recruiting new soldiers into its ranks, in the Delta and elsewhere. Lacking an adequate supply of troops, the enemy must convert some of its guerrilla forces into main force soldiers. This makes it necessary for the guerrillas to leave their home areas, which they dislike doing.

WASHINGTON NEWS 30 JUNE 1969 (1 JULY)

## Bruce Biossat / Inside Security



THO the undertaking is no secret, few people in official Washington realize how basic and wide-sweeping is the National Security Council's present review of U.S. defense policies and world commitments.

One source describes the studies as the most comprehensive re-thinking in this field in the last 10 years.

From another quarter comes word that the debate within the White House fold has been long, occasionally stormy, but healthy. The chief orchestrator, of course, is President Nixon's foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger.

\* \* \*

With his able, varied, and unprecedentedly large NSC staff, he evidently has helped to stimulate an insatiable quest for information among the debaters. Rough papers at many levels of inquiry have been flying back and forth within Defense and State departments, and between there and the White House.

In some instances, particular matters have been probed again and again as the White House reviewers have sought to broaden their grasp of a given weapons system or defense concept.

There is evidence that Defense Secretary Melvin Laird has devoted more of his time to this most significant review than to anything else that has engaged him since he took office.

Budget Director Robert Mayo, already tabbed by others as one of the President's least heralded influential associates, seems to have been in the thick of the debate at various stages.

Sources outside the White House say the reviewers are not trying to come up with a policy-and-commitment pattern which would fit only one projected defense budget level. Instead, it is said, the effort is to project differing configurations of commitment in accord with varying levels of expenditure.

COMPREHENSIVE as this continuing study is, it is about to be matched by another as Secretary Laird announces the naming of a blue-ribbon commission of outsiders — businessmen, scholars and others — to go over some of the same ground.

Tight security surrounds the substance of the lively White House debates, but sources have made clear that they range over ABM, MIRV, and other projected new weapons systems, the prospective arms talks with the Soviet Union, the relative roles of the various arms of the defense establishment, the kinds of world commitments the United States can reasonably be expected to assume in a world altered by the shattering impact of the Vietnam war, the bristling Sino-Soviet rivalry, the still unsettled Arab-Israeli conflict, the diminished military power of Western Europe, and so on.

One judgment which appears to govern the review is the notion that in the last two administrations U.S. policy-and-commitment was not fitted into a comprehensible whole pattern but tended to be loose and disjointed.

No indication has been given as to how long the NSC studies may go on, but the addition to the review which will be provided by the presumably independent Laird blue-ribbon commission suggests that the inquiry is far from its end.

There is no word, either, as to what if anything will be released to the public in the way of a report. In the 1950s under President Eisenhower, much stir surrounded the so-called Gaither report, a study done by an outside group. Yet, tho its essentials found their way into print, it was never released.

Conceivably Congress may try to get into the act at some point, as may former Defense and State officials. Former Under-secretary of State George Ball already has plunged in, asserting that U.S.-Soviet super-power rivalry is still the operative fact in the world. Other knowledgeable types are sure to join in.

### TWO AMERICAN POW'S ... CONTINUED

that toward the Vietnamese we have been wrong and unjust, and ours has been a real aggression and a despicable one. Period."

The officer made a movement. Ingvalson got up with the military obedience he was accustomed to. Then he said, with apparent relief: "I think it's enough now. I have to go."

"OK, Major. Would you like to give me the address of your family? So I can write them and tell them that I saw you and you are in good health."

"I write them regularly, and I get their mail regularly, thanks. For Christmas, I even sent them a radio message telling them how well I was." A moment of hesitation. "Who knows if they ever got it. . . ." Another moment of hesitation. "Well, if you like. Here is the address." It was an address in Sanford, Maine. "Anything else?"

"Yes. I would like to take a photo of you, Major."

"Please." And he stood up, rigid.

"There is no light here, Major. Come near a lamp please."

"Right." He made a step.

"More than that, Major, please."

"I think this is all right."

But it was not all right at all, and I was sure that the photo did not come out well. Maybe it was exactly what he wanted.

shyness or in order to demonstrate that he did not cooperate with me. Not at all casually, during that painful conversation, he had directed his eyes to the Vietnamese officer more than to me, answered for the Vietnamese officer more than for me, and now, while going, he was smiling at the Vietnamese officer more than at me. With that smile, he bowed again three times, and more profoundly than when he had arrived.

"Take candies, take," the officer said.

Ingvalson took two.

"Take all, take."

Ingvalson took all of them. Then, his hands filled with candies, he bowed again. And again. And again. That profoundly. And with that smile on his face. When he was gone, I asked the officer if the prisoners bowed spontaneously or if they were ordered to do so. The officer got very mad and said that when somebody is a prisoner, he must accept the customs of the country where he is a prisoner. Politeness comes first. Then he added that in any case, he did not like my question; that most of the questions I had put to the prisoners he did not like either; that he did not like my attitude; that he doubted I was a real journalist or an intelligent person. So I answered that it was all right with me, and we left each other

# Cambodia Port Called Red Supply Key

By GEORGE MCARTHUR  
Associated Press Staff Writer

SAIGON — The Cambodian port of Sihanoukville has replaced the Ho Chi Minh Trail as the major channel for enemy war material slipped into South Vietnam, according to U.S. intelligence reports.

The startling increase in arms and munitions flowing through the port of neutralist Cambodia was disclosed yesterday by authoritative informants.

(Meanwhile, Huynh Tan Phat, president of the Viet Cong's provisional revolutionary government in South Vietnam, arrived today in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, for an official visit of about five days, United Press International reported.)

(Cambodia recognized the Viet Cong's provisional government shortly after it was proclaimed earlier this month. Phat was accompanied by his vice minister, Ngoc Ky, and Madame Duong Quynh Hoa, Viet Cong minister of public health, social affairs and war wounded.)

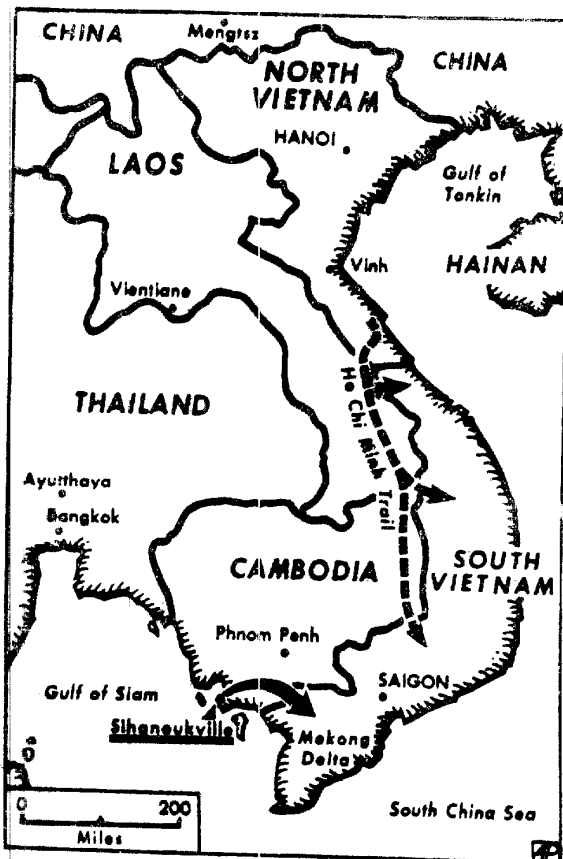
(The party was brought to the Phnom Penh airport by Cambodian army helicopter from the northern Cambodian province of Kompong Cham, and was met at the airport by members of the Cambodian government, UPI said.)

## Key Areas Supplied

The sources in Saigon said the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in the Mekong Delta, the jungle war zones around and northwest of Saigon and the southern portion of the central highlands are now getting all their supplies through Sihanoukville. Most enemy forces are concentrated in these areas.

The Communist command, however, still uses the Ho Chi Minh Trail to send all troops to South Vietnam and to send supplies to troops in the north.

Figures for the exact tonnage moving through Sihanoukville



Map locates the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville, which U.S. intelligence says has replaced the Ho Chi Minh Trail as the major channel for enemy war material slipped into South Vietnam.

—Associated Press

Most of the supplies arrive in Sihanoukville aboard ships from Communist China, authorities say. Some may come aboard Soviet vessels. Most of these that are seen in the port, however, are believed to be carrying material for the Cambodian army, which is largely equipped with Soviet weapons.

There was no indication when the Communist command shifted the weight of supply movements from the Ho Chi Minh Trail to Sihanoukville. Evidently it began early this year after the intensified U.S. bombing of Laos, which began after the bombing halt of North Vietnam.

There is also evidence that the port of Sihanoukville is being built up even further. It can now handle fewer than a dozen ships at a time.

## Sihanouk Denies Charge

Allied authorities have long contended that some supplies were reaching the Viet Cong through Sihanoukville, but Sihanouk has consistently denied the charge. Nevertheless he has also made great efforts to enlarge the port on the Gulf of Thailand to decrease his dependence on passage to the sea down the Mekong River through Vietnam.

The increased flow of supplies through Sihanoukville came at a time when Sihanouk, despite his open support for the Viet Cong's National Liberation Front, was making some moves to lessen his entanglements.

American sources say there is evidence that in at least some border spots Sihanouk has moved to diminish the flow of supplies and discourage Viet Cong forces holding sanctuary areas.

After blowing hot and cold, he also has agreed to re-establish diplomatic contacts with the United States at the charge d'affaires level. It does not seem likely this will affect the increased traffic in the port of Sihanoukville.

are classified. Intelligence reports accepted by the allied command say the tonnages are of such magnitude they must be known to Cambodia's ruler, Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

In addition, Hanoi must maintain on Cambodia soil a complex command structure to insure that the supplies move regularly to the right areas.

Ironically, much of the war material moves north in truck convoys from Sihanoukville on a road initially financed by American aid before Cambodia broke relations with Washington in 1965.

WASHINGTON NEWS 30 JUNE 1969 (1JULY)

## Greek Arm Decline Frets U.S.

By RICHARD H. BOYCE  
Scriptures-Howard Staff Writer

The U.S. and other members of NATO are disturbed at what they regard as a weakening of Greece's military effectiveness to fulfill its NATO defense role, diplomatic sources here disclosed today.

But the NATO members are reluctant to take the necessary steps to bolster Greece's military strength unless its army junta moves more speedily to restore representative government.

Since Greek army colonels grabbed power there

number of high ranking army officers has retired, been assigned to remote posts, or removed from command as plotters against the junta.

## EXILED

Only last month the junta said 10 officers — including six generals — were to be exiled for "activities against the public order."

The 38 military officers who held the most senior command posts before the army takeover have been removed. NATO officials estimate another 100 officers of the Greek army, navy and air force have left.

After now-exiled King Constantine tried unsuccessfully in December, 1967, to overthrow the junta, more naval officers were ousted. The Greek navy, more than any unit of

strongly pro-Constantine.

Junior officers promoted by the junta to replace the ousted navy men were inexperienced, the diplomatic sources said. As a result, the Greek navy performed poorly in NATO maneuvers conducted in the Mediterranean last fall.

NATO officials also were critical of Greek air force performance. But this was blamed primarily on equipment deficiencies rather than personnel. The U.S. stopped supplying arms and replacement parts to Greece after the 1967 coup, to show its displeasure.

The NATO Council, at its November meeting in Brussels, decided that Greece needed additional weapons, in order to re-establish high performance effectiveness. The U.S. especially was concerned

been assigned to watch and report on increasing Russian submarine activities in the Mediterranean.

The council decided that West Germany should provide Greece with three submarines. Britain should provide surface naval vessels, and the U.S. fighter-interceptor aircraft.

The U.S. did resume shipping spare parts and small items to Greece, but decided to provide planes and other large items only on a case-by-case basis. The hope was in this way to prod the Greek junta into a speedier return to representative government. U.S. officials declined today to say if any new planes have yet gone to Greece.

Greece also asked the U.S. for tanks but U.S. officials refused, feeling the tanks could be used in putting down civil demonstrations.

### *Fulbright Hits Secrecy On Vietnam Matters*

Associated Press

Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) complained yesterday that the Nixon Administration is putting a secret label on information about Vietnam and other matters it subsequently leaks to the news media.

Fulbright said the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he heads was given classified information about U.S. offensive moves in Vietnam and Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird subsequently refused his plea for removal of the secrecy ban on the grounds that intelligence sources might be compromised.

Among the points at issue, as listed by Fulbright, was the matter of infiltration by North Vietnamese forces.

He said that two days after he received a reply from Laird, Dr. John S. Foster Jr., Pentagon research chief, disclosed that the sensor system which detects infiltrators was one of the major technical advances in the Vietnam war.

The Committee chairman said this was akin to the pattern established when the group was briefed on the shooting down of a Navy electronics plane off North Korea. He said it turned out that information a Pentagon representative was reluctant to discuss even off the record had already appeared in national news magazines.



25 MAR 1969

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2

## The Hidden War

### Elite 'Phoenix' Forces Hunt Vietcong Chiefs In an Isolated Village

### Raid Prompted by Informers Finds Most of Foe Gone And Natives Tight-Lipped

### Demolishing a VC Monument

By PETER R. KANN

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

DON NHON, South Vietnam—Was it a trap? There was reason for suspicion.

But the risk had to be taken. An unsolicited bit of information offered an opportunity to strike at a local unit of the Vietcong "infrastructure" (VCI), the clandestine political and administrative apparatus through which the enemy lays claim to control much of the Vietnamese countryside.

The affair began like this:

Two ragged Vietnamese, one short and squat, the other tall and thin, recently walked into Don Nhon, a village about 50 miles southwest of Saigon that is the capital of Don Nhon District. The pair told American officials that they wanted to talk about the VCI in their home village of Vinh Hoa, a nearby community of about 2,000 persons nestled deep in Vietcong territory along a Mekong River tributary. A full of interrogators from the Police Special Vietcong-sponsored "Liberation Committee" had been elected to govern Vinh Hoa five months previously, the informers said.

The U.S. advisers were dubious about taking military action on the basis of this intelligence. An ambush might be in the offing. Vinh Hoa was dangerous territory, several miles from the nearest government-controlled village. And the informers said they were refugees, rather than Vietcong defectors, who normally could be expected to be more eager to talk. But the two stuck to their story of overt Vietcong control in their village, and their information checked out with that in allied files.

#### High Priority

Vinh Hoa clearly was a target for "Operation Phoenix," the high-priority allied effort to root out the VCI across South Vietnam. The year-old Phoenix campaign obviously is related to the Paris negotiations. When peace comes, South Vietnam's claims to control the countryside will be strongest where the VCI cadre are fewest.

The Vietcong claim that about 1,800 governing bodies have been freely elected in "liberated areas" of South Vietnam. The U.S. dismisses most of the committees as fictions existing only on paper and claims VCI cadre are being wiped out at a rate of better than 2,300 a month. Total VCI strength is estimated at about 70,000.

Although conceived largely by CIA men and other American planners, Operation Phoenix is executed primarily by Vietnamese troops. Its methods range from after-dark assassination strikes by small killer squads to battalion-sized cordon and search efforts. A small strike clearly wasn't indicated for Vinh Hoa. The village might be heavily defended. U.S. officials finally settled on a plan for a daylight assault with helicopter transportation. The U.S. 9th Division would provide support.

#### Hunting the Enemy

Phoenix operations are reputed to be highly sophisticated and productive affairs. The Vinh Hoa effort proved to be neither. It involved intricate—and apparently flawed—planning, largely fruitless interrogation of fearful, tight-lipped villagers, calculated brutality applied to suspected Vietcong, the execution of one suspect, looting of homes by Vietnamese troops, systematic destruction of village installations and a largely unproductive hunt for Vietcong officials who apparently had fled by sampan long before the allies arrived.

The operation highlighted agonizing questions about Phoenix and the allied methods for waging war in Vietnam. Because the Vietcong torture and assassinate, should the allies? Is there value in an operation that "sweeps" a Vietcong area and then departs, leaving no permanent allied presence? Who should be considered Vietcong? Does the VC include a farmer who happens to own ancestral rice land in a Vietcong-controlled village and pays taxes to the enemy?

The counter-infrastructure experts are the Provincial Reconnaissance Units, called "PRUs." Along with the Vietnamese, they include Cambodian and Chinese Nung mercenaries. All are recruited, trained and paid by the CIA. In two days of planning the Vinh Hoa force grew to include about 40 PRUs, about 30 Vietnamese special combat police and a handful of interrogators from the Police Special Branch, Census-Grievance men and psychological warfare cadre. The Americans taking part in the operation were two civilian PRU advisers, two civilian advisers to the special police, two young Army officers working in Don Nhon District and several radio operators. Two companies of the 9th Division, about 110 men, were to form a cordon around the village to prevent Vietcong escapes.

#### The Last Meeting

Final plans were coordinated at the Tactical Operations Center of Kien Hoa province (which includes Don Nhon) the night before the strike, with more than a dozen Americans and Vietnamese attending or within earshot. The size of the meeting troubled CIA men. They worried, justifiably as it turned out, that confusion and intelligence leaks would follow.

At 7 a.m. the next morning, the operation force is waiting for its helicopter transport at the airfield at Ben Tre, the Kien Hoa provincial capital. And waiting. It turns out that the 9th Division is having difficulty arranging its "air assets." An outpost under siege in a neighboring province has to be aided.

The civilian U.S. advisers begin to get restless and irritable: "The U.S. Army is more trouble than it's worth . . . their maps and charts and crap . . . goddamned army must have schools that teach delay and confusion . . . never seen a 9th Division operation go off on time. . . ."

One adviser spots a plane to the west circling roughly over the area of the target village. He shouts: "Great. Just. . . ."

great. The army is really good at this crap. Pick up a paper and read all about it. Read about the operation that's coming in to get you."

The PRUs and Vietnamese special combat police are wearing a wild variety of jungle fatigues, flak jackets, bush hats, berets, combat boots, tennis shoes and sandals. Some are barefoot. Initially they are sitting in orderly rows along the runway. Soon they begin dispersing about the airfield.

The PRUs invent a game. As a big C130 cargo plane comes in to land, they sit on the runway, then duck their heads as the plane's wings whip past just above them. "They're the toughest men in this war," says one adviser. "They join this outfit because they want action."

The American points to a small Vietnamese half-doing on the grass. "That man used to be a VC. He got disillusioned with them, so they killed his family. He lit out for the bush. Spent two years out there alone, conducting a private vendetta against Charlie. God knows how many VC he killed. Finally he came in and joined up with the PRUs. He wants to kill more VCs."

#### Hovering Close

Shortly after 9 a.m., two hours late, 10 helicopters arrive. The Phoenix force piles aboard and is flown for 15 minutes across flat rice land and coconut groves to the landing zone, a rice paddy less than a mile from the center of Vinh Hoa. The helicopters hover close to the ground, and the troops leap out, wading cautiously through thigh-deep mud and water toward a treeline from which they expect enemy fire.

There is no firing. At the treeline the troops are joined by the Don Nhon District U.S. advisers and the two Vietnamese informants who prompted the operation. They have been separately helicoptered to the scene. The informers, garbed in baggy U.S. Army fatigues, are to remain mystery men, for their own protection. Their heads are covered with brown cloth bags with eye and mouth holes. The two present a part comic, part frightening spectacle.

The local advisers have bad news. They say the 9th Division cordon along the southern fringe of the village didn't get into place until about 9 a.m., two hours late, leaving the Vietcong an escape route. (The 9th Division later denies any delay.) Now the informers claim not to recognize the approach being taken to the village. One American sharply questions them. Another is cursing the Vietnamese "psywar" operatives trampling along with the troops: "All we need are these goddamned guys with their leaflets. And they're wearing black pajamas. Beautiful. Now the army (the 9th Division troops) will zap 'em as VC."

#### Looking Around

Several of the Vietnamese special police have found an empty farmhouse, recently deserted judging by damp betel-nut stains on the floor. They are passing the time knocking holes in a water barrel. In another farmhouse, the occupant, an old lady, stares at a wall while two carefree PRUs boil eggs on her wood stove.

A lone PRU wanders along the treeline shaking his head and muttering, "VC di di, VC di di . . . (VC gone, VC gone)." The troops presently advance toward a cluster of houses nearer the village center. Spaced along the mud trails at intervals of about 10 yards are thick mud bunkers, each large enough for several men. Some houses also have bunkers, inside

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2

continued



or out. Vinh Hoa, being within an allied "free strike zone," is subject to air and artillery pounding.

No booby traps materialize. The troops arrive at a substantial farmhouse with flower beds in the front yard, a manicured hedge and pillars flanking the front entrance. It is one of many prosperous homes in Vinh Hoa—surprising, since Vietcong villages usually are poorer than government-controlled towns. Isolation from major markets, high Vietcong taxes and allied bombing are among the reasons.

Behind the house some leaf wrappings are found. "The VC must have been here," an American says. "That's what they wrap field rations in." (Leaves are used by most rural Vietnamese, VC or not, to wrap food.) The occupant of the house, an old man who stares at the interlopers through wire-rim spectacles, is shaking, through age, or fear, or both.

The aged Vietnamese is questioned briefly. "Bring him along," an American says sharply. "Let's move." Another adviser says, "That old man could be the top dog VC in this village. You never know." The old man totters along with the troops. He is released in mid-afternoon when one of the two informers claims him as an uncle.

#### Interrogation

At about 11 a.m., an American adviser and two special police turn up with three captives. "Found them hiding in a house," the American says. The informers inspect the captives and whisper, through an interpreter, that one is a Vietcong village guerrilla, the second a Vietcong "security section chief" and the third a non-Vietcong, perhaps a deserter from the South Vietnamese army.

The two identified as Vietcong are bound, and one of them, a narrow-shouldered, bent young man with protruding teeth, is leaned against a tree trunk. Several police interrogators and PRUs gather around him and fire questions. They want to know where Vietcong weapons and ammunition are hidden.

The suspect doesn't know or won't say. Soon the questions are interspersed with yanks at his hair and sharp kicks to his head, face and groin. The prisoner sags against the tree, face bloodied.

"Americans don't want to be here for any more of this," says one U.S. adviser, moving away. "It's a nasty goddamned business." He adds, "You know, it's a whole cycle of this stuff. Last week in another village near Don Nhon the VC marched five government sympathizers into the marketplace and beat their heads in with hammers. So we return it on this guy. It goes on and on."

By now the informers have gotten their bearings. They lead most of the troops along a trail to a hospital building behind a hedge of blue flowers. It is a straw-thatch structure containing eight wide plank beds separated by white plastic curtains. In one corner is a mud bunker, in another a crude case of glassware and medicine bottles, some with French and American labels. There are no patients or traces of them.

The Americans decide it is a Vietcong hospital for wounded enemy troops. "Burn it," an American adviser directs. Ignited with cigaret lighters, the hut burns readily.

#### Vinh Hoa Village

In single file, the troops wind along a trail toward the center of Vinh Hoa. Since there hasn't been any firing, the possibility of an ambush is discounted. Some of the PRUs and special police are carrying food and household articles taken from the outlying farmhouses. The "psywarriors" are strewing the trail with pro-

paganda leaflets carried in plastic bags. Some of the PRUs have ringed their helmets with garlands of flowers. The procession takes on a festive air.

Ten minutes later the column reaches the center of the village, a small cluster of houses and shops facing a square that previously contained a covered marketplace. The marketplace has been bombed out. In the center of the square is a concrete obelisk about 10 feet high—a Vietcong memorial, say the Americans, dedicated to the enemy dead. It is one target of the Phoenix strike.

The PRUs and Vietnamese special police begin searching—and sacking—the homes. They are bored, and restless, because there has been no "action." The psywarriors' plastic bags, emptied of propaganda, are commandeered for loot ranging from clothing to chickens. "Trick or treat," says an American, not really amused. In one house, some of the Vietnamese troops are having a small celebration. They have unearthed a bottle of rice wine.

A few village residents, women, children and old men, are assembled along one side of the square. They squat on their haunches in the dust. Several male captives are bound a few yards away. Against a wall, the narrow-shouldered prisoner is rocking back and forth, a trickle of blood running down his head.

Amid whirling dust, a 9th Division helicopter lands in the square. A lean U.S. lieutenant colonel in polished boots and trim uniform steps out with aides in tow. Displaying a map marked with red grease pencil, he reports the kill totals of the support troops: "Charlie Company got three KIAs (Killed In Action), Delta Company two, we got one from my chopper. . . ." All the fatalities, he says, were armed Vietcong, carrying packs. They were shot trying to flee through the cordon. "They had low-level documents on them," the colonel reports. Presently the chopper leaves.

In the middle of the square, two Americans are strapping demolition charges around the Vietcong monument. A one-minute warning is sounded. Everyone takes cover. As the charge explodes, the monument disintegrates into chunks of brick and concrete. It is exactly noon.

#### The Village Church

The explosion seems to galvanize the foraging troops into action. "Don't they have anything to do but loot those houses?" an American PRU adviser shouts to a Vietnamese lieutenant. "Get the men out combing the rest of this village." Two search parties move out. A third group, mostly Americans, crosses a narrow footbridge spanning a canal to investigate a church.

Crossing the bridge, the Americans spot fresh footprints on both sides of the river connected with the canal. For the moment, they pose a mystery.

The church, a Roman Catholic structure, is bolted shut at front and rear. Just as two Americans warily advance to smash a lock, the front door opens and an elderly man in white pajamas appears, smiling as though to welcome parishioners to services. The inside of the little church is newly painted and neatly scrubbed. A row of angled bullet holes along the metal-sheet roof attests to a visit from a helicopter gunship.

In the rear are a large drum and a gong. An American points to them and questions the elderly church attendant.

"What are they for?"

"To call the faithful to worship."

"Did you see any people leaving the village this morning?"

"No. . . ."

"We have information on how much this church pays to the VC in taxes. How much do you say it pays?"

"Maybe the people pay 100 or 200 plasters (80 cents to \$1.60)."

"The church, how much does it pay?"

"The church does not pay taxes. The church never pays taxes."

"The hell it doesn't pay," the American says. "This may be a Catholic church, but it's Charlie's Catholic church."

#### A Taciturn Lady

The Americans follow a path past the church to a cluster of solidly built homes. Most are empty. In one, two candles burn before a postcard picture of Christ. In another, a picture of Pope Paul sits on a small altar beside a mud bunker. One house is occupied by a woman with six children. She is interrogated.

"Did you see people crossing the river this morning?"

"No, I was in my bunker."

"Where is your husband?"

"He went to the market at Cai Mang."

"Why?"

"He always goes when the soldiers come here. . . ."

"Do you know who are the VC in this village?"

"No. We don't know VC. We are Catholic. Catholics don't know VC."

"We know that a Liberation Committee was elected here. When?"

"I just heard about it recently."

"Who is the Vietcong village chief here?"

"I don't know. . . ."

"How much tax do you pay to the VC?"

"More than 1,000 plasters." (About \$8.)

"How often do Vietcong song and dance (propaganda) teams come and visit?"

"Not often."

"What do they say?"

"They say the Americans will go home soon."

"How often does your husband stand guard for the VC?"

"Every five or six days."

"How often do the women here have to make punji stakes (poisoned stakes) for the VC?"

"Once or twice a year."

"That's pretty typical," says the American, heading back across the footbridge to the village square.

#### Disappearing Enemy

An American adviser has figured out the footprints on both sides of the river. There are no sampans around the village. Adult males except for old men, seem almost nonexistent. The village population is estimated at 2,000, but no more than 200 persons have been seen on this day.

The American finds a youngster hiding in a farmhouse. He poses a few perfunctory questions, then suddenly demands: "At what time this morning did all the people leave here by boat?" Perhaps startled by the suddenness of the query, the boy replies, "At four o'clock."

The conclusion: Most of the village's Vietcong guerrillas, VCI cadre and Liberation Committee members have eluded the Phoenix troops. "They just had to have that big meeting last night," fumes an American adviser, recalling the last planning session for the operation. "Everyone had to get in on this god-damned operation. The VC must have known

all about it by midnight last night. So they blew the place. Just sailed down the river on their sampans."

But there may be something to salvage from the operation. In the square, the group of squatting villagers has grown to 50 or 60. Census-Grievance operatives examine their identification cards. Few have them; in Vietcong-controlled areas, the enemy forbids the people to carry government ID cards and often punishes those who do.

The two informers, still with bags on their heads, stand behind a nearby wall, peering at the villagers. Occasionally they point to a resident and whisper to a PRU. Those put under suspicion are pulled to their feet, bound and taken aside to the prisoner group. The others remain on their haunches staring silently into the dust.

#### The Moving Finger

One villager "fingered" by the informers is a bowlegged woman clutching a baby. She is identified as a member of the village "women-farmer association," a Vietcong citizen-involvement organization not normally considered important enough to classify as Vietcong cadre. ("No point picking them up," a U.S. official says later in Saigon. "They're more trouble than they're worth to process and hold.")

But the woman is moved to the prisoner group, clutching the baby. Her two other children, a boy about six and a girl about 10 years old, begin to cry loudly. A PRU raises a rifle butt over their heads menacingly, and the wails subside into muffled sobs.

From behind a nearby house two shots are heard. The narrow-shouldered prisoner has been executed. His body is dumped into a bunker.

One of the psywar operatives lectures the villagers on the perils of supporting the Vietcong and outlines the benefits of backing the Saigon government. Propaganda sheets bearing a smiling portrait of President Nguyen Van Thieu are handed out.

At one side of the square an American adviser muses about the operation and what it has to do with the war: "There are 30 people sitting around a table in Paris, and they just aren't going to hack it. How can they solve this thing? The people in this village have been VC for 10 years, maybe 20. How are you going to change that? We come here on an operation, and what does it prove? We've got some crook sitting in Don Nhon picking up a salary every month because he claims to be the government village chief here. He hasn't dared to visit this village for seven years. The district chief was too chicken to come on this operation. So we come in, pick up a few Charlies and leave. The VC will be back in control here tonight. . . ."

#### Heading Back

At 3 p.m., with five prisoners in tow, the troops start hiking back to the landing zone in the rice paddy for transportation home. Near the paddy they meet two U.S. soldiers from the 9th Division cordon, leading two prisoners. Each of the captives wears a neatly printed "Detainee Card."

The taller and more talkative of the two informers is brought forward to examine the new prisoners. One is identified as a deputy Vietcong village chief, the other as a non-Vietcong. Both are placed with the other prisoners.

A deputy Vietcong village chief would be the most important captive of the day by far, the got us a big one," says an elated American adviser. Then cautions nearby PRUs: "You

keep this one alive, you hear. We want him alive."

Half an hour later the troops have been helicoptered back to their compound in Ben Tre and the prisoners are on their way to the Police Special Branch interrogation center. Results of the operation: Eight kills, one after torture. Seven prisoners taken for interrogation. One war memorial dynamited. One hospital burned. No friendly casualties.

1 March 1969

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2

## Song of the Gung-Ho Gladiators

The pacification program in South Vietnam is claiming great—one might say, unbelievable—progress. That being so, why risk any compromise with the enemy; the war in the South can be won, on our terms, so the gung-ho gladiators say. US headquarters (Saigon) reports that nearly two million additional rural Vietnamese have been extended "protection" since the end of September as a result of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Nearly half of these, it reports, formerly lived under Vietcong control; the rest were formerly "contested." The monthly Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) for December showed 76.3 percent of the nation's 17.5 million inhabitants living in "relatively secure" areas, up ten points since September and an all-time high. "The Government of Vietnam is clearly winning the pacification war," Ambassador Robert Komer said on his return from Saigon, where he directed the office for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS); "this fact will help determine the shape of a settlement in Paris."

Pacification reports are the US mission's hallucinogen. During the same period, September to December, a minimum of 400 to 500 Vietnamese civilians died each week as a result of the fighting, about two-thirds of them women or children under 14. (This estimate is derived from monthly figures compiled by the Vietnamese Health Ministry on persons with war-connected injury admitted to South Vietnamese provincial hospitals. The figures probably understate the civilian war casualties by half or more.) Allied military combat deaths during the period, including American, South Vietnamese and others, averaged about 350 a week. One is tempted to ask whether "relatively secure" is a yardstick of safety for military personnel or for local residents. Since the December pacification figures were released, Vietcong "terror incidents" have risen 30 percent; numerous "secure" provincial capitals, towns, villages and hamlets have been hit. The countryside is still in turmoil.

In a recent study for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. John V. Tunney (D, Calif.) shows that the pacification reporting system, HES, is particularly vulnerable to distortion because of the mission's ever-present desire to show "progress." Tunney's study is backed up by a detailed report by the General Accounting Office, which the Pentagon has classified "confidential" in order to prevent publication. It also is confirmed by news stories from Vietnam, such as David Hoffman's in the Jan. 28 *Washington Post*, which reports that some American generals dismiss the HES as "just a numbers game we're playing for Paris."

HES is a Komer brainchild. Monthly reports on nearly 13,000 hamlets are supplied by the 232 American officers serving as advisers to South Vietnamese district-level officials. About 4,000 hamlets are Vietcong controlled, but for each of the others the district adviser has to fill out a complex worksheet listing 18 standards of progress, each graded from A (best) to E (worst). These calculations are averaged to produce a monthly grade for each hamlet. C or better is "relatively secure," D and E are "contested." Communist controlled hamlets are graded V. Then the grades are fed into a computer that provides a measure of overall progress.

Tunney found that American district advisers seldom spend more than four or five months in a district and usually lack the language training and knowledge of Vietcong ways necessary to make accurate assessments. Frequently they grade hamlets they have not visited for lack of time, relying on hearsay or merely repeating the former assessment. Having found that HES reports are used by superiors to measure their own job productivity, district advisers are under pressure not to report backsliding, or to admit that they or their predecessors had been over-optimistic.

The district advisers are supposed to oversee all "nation-building" efforts in their districts, and the pressure of too many commitments may explain some shoddy reporting. But the faults that Tunney finds in the pacification reporting system turn up in more professional intelligence efforts as well. Whether military or CIA, the intelligence men are bureaucrats, after all, and subject to their bosses' displeasure; which is one reason why independent news reporting from Vietnam has been more in touch with reality than official reporting.

Successive intelligence shortcomings—the underestimation of Vietcong/Hanoi military strength in 1965-67; the miscalculation of Hanoi's determination; the surprise effect of the Tet offensive; the almost single-minded concentration on the large-unit military threat, to the exclusion of study of Vietcong political methods and activities—certainly justify a reexamination of the whole intelligence process in Vietnam.

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2

TO:		DATE 28 FEB 69	
ROOM NO.	BUILDING		
REMARKS:  New Republic criticism of Pacification Program of Korea.			
FROM:		EXTENSION	
BUILDING		REPLACES FORM 36-8 WHICH MAY BE USED.	

Approved For Release 2003/03/25 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300160006-2